

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 04315 061709Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 SP-02 INR-10 INRE-00
L-03 ARA-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 /051 W
-----020036 061802Z /14-S

O 061600Z APR 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7679
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 4315

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOE, ET, SO
SUBJECT: POSTPONEMENT OF OAU MEETING ON THE HORN CONFLICT

REF: STATE 088087

1. SUMMARY. ON APRIL 6 DCM CONVEYED TALKING POINTS
CONTAINED IN PARAS 3 AND 6 OF REFTEL TO VICTOR TAYLOR,
ACTING DIRECTOR OF MEA'S AFRICA DEPARTMENT. TAYLOR
RESPONDED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION OF CONVENING THE
OAU GOOD OFFICES COMMITTED ON APRIL 10 BECAUSE ALL PARTIES
INVOLVED HAD BEEN NOTIFIED EARLY THIS WEEK OF THE INDEFINITE
POSTPONEMENT OF THE MEETING. I CAN TRY TO PERSUADE
COMMISSIONER GARBA TO RESCHEDULE AN EARLY MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE BUT I DOUBT WHETHER HE WOULD BE WILLING TO DO SO.
END SUMMARY.

2. TAYLOR SAID THAT SOMALIA HAD ORGINALLY WANTED THIS
MEETING TO BE A SUMMIT ONE. NIGERIA HAD FAVORED THE
MINISTERIAL LEVEL AND THE ARGUMENT ON THIS SCORE HAD
LASTED SOME TIME. ACCORDING TO TAYLOR, BOTH SOMALIA
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AND ETHIOPIA FINALLY AGREED TO COME TO LAGOS FOR THE
APRIL 10 MEETING BUT IT WAS APPARENT TO THE FMG THAT
EACH SIDE WAS CONSENTING TO DO SO ONLY BECAUSE IT EXPECTED
THE OTHER TO ATTEND AND DID NOT WISH TO BE BLAMED
FOR NON-ATTENDANCE. TAYLOR SAID IT WAS CLEAR TO THE FMG
THAT THE POSITIONS OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WERE STILL SO
FAR APART THAT THE APRIL 10 MEETING HAD NO PROSPECT OF

SUCCESS, AND THE FMG DID NOT WISH TO REPEAT THE FRUITLESS OAU MEETING EARLIER HELD IN LIBREVILLE ON THE HORN CONFLICT. ETHIOPIA WAS DEMANDING THAT SOMALIA RENOUNCE ITS TERRITORIAL CLAIMS WITH REGARD TO THE OGADEN, DJIBOUTI AND KENYA, WHEREAS SOMALIA WAS STILL CLAIMING THE OGADEN.

3. TAYLOR SAID THAT THE FMG WOULD BE WORKING WITH BOTH THE SOMALI AND ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENTS IN THE WEEKS AHEAD TO TRY AND NARROW THE GAP BETWEEN THEIR POSITIONS. HE SAID THAT A MEETING OF THE OAU GOOD OFFICES COMMITTEE WOULD NOT BE CALLED UNTIL THE PROSPECTS FOR ACCOMPLISHING SOMETHING APPEARED BETTER THAN THEY DO AT PRESENT.

4. TAYLOR ALSO MENTIONED THAT PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE HAD SENT A MESSAGE TO GENERAL OBASANJO REGARDING THE RECENT ETHIOPIAN BOMBING OF THE VILLAGE IN SOMALIA AND THAT GENERAL OBASANJO HAS A REPLY IN PREPARATION.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH I CAN SEEK AN APPOINTMENT WITH COMMISSIONER GARBA AND ENDEAVOR TO PERSUADE HIM TO RESCHEDULE A MEETING OF THE GOOD OFFICES COMMITTEE, I THINK OUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS WOULD BE VERY SLIM. HE IS NOT LIKELY TO CONSIDER THE EVIDENCE OF A POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES CONTAINED IN REFTEL SUFFICIENTLY STRONG FOR THE FMG TO REVERSE ITS POSITION AGAIN. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE FMG IS ANXIOUS NOT TO BE SADDLED WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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CONVENING A FRUITLESS MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE IN LAGOS. MOREOVER THE FMG WOULD FIND IT AWKWARD TO EXPLAIN ADEQUATELY ITS ON-OFF-ON-AGAIN APPROACH TO THE MEETING.

6. THE DEPARTMENT WILL PROBABLY BE CONSIDERING ONCE AGAIN THE FEASIBILITY OF SEEKING A SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON THE HORN CONFLICT, EVEN THOUGH THE FMG IS APPARENTLY UNWILLING TO CONVENE THE OAU GOOD OFFICES COMMITTEE UNTIL IT SEES GREATER LIKELIHOOD THAT THE MEETING WILL ENJOY SOME SUCCESS, I ANTICIPATE THAT GARBA WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO ARGUE THAT THE OAU RATHER THAN THE SECURITY COUNCIL IS THE PROPER FORUM IN WHICH TO SEEK TO RESOLVE THE OGADEN ISSUE. EASUM

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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